



SILVER CRESCENT

FOUNDATION

Promoting manufacturing vitality and
career opportunities in South Carolina

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May 19, 2011

Marlene Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

RE: *Connect America Fund, WC Docket No. 10-90, A National Broadband Plan for Our Future, GN Docket No. 09-51, High-Cost Universal Service Support, WC Docket No. 05-337*

Dear Ms. Dortch:

Recently, I learned the Federal Communications Commission was considering new rules which may jeopardize free conferencing. If these types of services go away, then the system will revert back to the old days when everyone had to pay an exorbitant fee in order to make a conference call. As President and Chief Executive Officer of the Silver Crescent Foundation, I have seen firsthand how our organization has been helped with this service.

Our organization has over 30 years of experience supporting education, engineering and technology development in the state. This experience helps us collaborate and collectively reach our goals. Another tool which helps us achieve our mission is free conferencing services. This service enables us to cost effectively and efficiently communicate with our partners.

Manufacturing is a leading economic engine in South Carolina. The Silver Crescent Foundation supports the vitality of South Carolina's manufacturing industry and educates people about rewarding career opportunities in manufacturing. We accomplish these activities through a number of programs that promote the benefits of manufacturing to people of all ages, backgrounds and educational experiences.

We collaborate with other nonprofit organizations, business leaders, institutions of higher learning and public school systems to help young people understand the fundamental connections between engineering and technological innovation and a high standard of living. We encourage young people to pursue math and science studies so they may become the manufacturing leaders of tomorrow.

The Foundation is striving to ensure the state's workforce pipeline will remain filled with the highly skilled workers South Carolina needs to remain competitive and also help address the state's current high unemployment rate of 9.9%. A strong manufacturing sector also helps the national economy overall. Every \$1.00 in manufactured goods generates an additional \$1.37 worth of additional economic activity.

**DISCOVER
MANUFACTURING**

As you proceed with your rulemaking, I respectfully ask you to consider how they would impact organizations such as the Silver Crescent Foundation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Tony Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Tony Smith
President and Chief Executive Officer

cc: Chairman Julius Genachowski
Commissioner Michael J. Copps
Commissioner Robert M. McDowell
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Meredith Attwell Baker